POL 14 VIETS

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XR POL 15-1 VIETS

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Saigon 2885

PAGE 01 SAIGON 00001 11215Z

82
ACTION EA 19

INFO SP 02 SS 35 GPM 03 SC 01 NSC 10 RSC 01 SAH 02 H 02 NSCE 00
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izuberg DATE 10/6/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (3)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

P R 111040Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4434
INFO CINCPAC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 2885

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A) SAIGON 2597 B) SAIGON 2767

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER DATED AUGUST 8 MENTIONED REF A) SENT BY TEN CIVILIAN PRESIDENTIAL SLATES TO GENERALS THIEU AND KY IN WHICH CANDIDATES (A) PROTEST GVN'S HANDLING OF "DONG HA" AFFAIR AND (B) RAISES THE QUESTION OF THE GVN'S SINCERITY IN FULFILLING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAW: QUOTE
SAIGON, AUGUST 8, 1967

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TO: THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
DEAR CHAIRMEN,
WE, THE PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES OF THE UNDERSIGNED TICKETS, HAVE AGREED TO SEND YOU THIS LETTER FOLLOWING A THOROUGH DISCUSSION WHICH HAS LASTED FOR FIVE HOURS. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER IS TO:
1) STRONGLY PROTEST AGAINST THE IRRESPONSIBLE AND INSULTING

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ACTION OF THE AUTHORITIES TOWARD US IN THE "DONG HA AFFAIR" WHICH WILL BE SUMMARIZED BELOW;
2; POSE THE QUESTION OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE FUTURE APPLICATION OF LAW NO. 1/67 DATED JUNE 15, 1967 WHICH PRESCRIBES REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

THE DONG HA AFFAIR

IN EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAM OF "PUBLIC TALKS WITH THE VOTERS," WE WENT ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 8, 1967 TO QUANG TRI, SITE PRESCRIBED BY THE PROGRAM, ABOARD TWO MILITARY PLANES. BEFORE TAKING OFF, WE WERE INFORMED BY THE CREW THAT, ACCORDING TO THE ORDER RECEIVED, THE PLANES WOULD LAND AT THE DONG HA

AIRFIELD AND WOULD WAIT FOR US THERE WHILE WE TRAVELED TO QUANG TRI, AND THAT AT 5 P.M. WE WOULD FLY BACK TO DA NANG WHERE WE WOULD STAY OVERNIGHT BEFORE RESUMING THE FLIGHT TO HUE THE NEXT MORNING AT 8 O'CLOCK. ALL OF US AND A FEW JOURNALISTS WHO WERE WITH US WERE CERTAIN THAT IN DONG HA THERE WOULD BE CARS FROM THE PROVINCE TO PICK US UP AND TO TAKE US TO QUANG TRI. BUT WHEN WE LANDED AT 11:30, WE DIDN'T SEE ANY VIETNAMESE AT THE US MILITARY AIRSTRIP IN DONG HA. ALMOST AN HOUR ELAPSED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HEAT AND THIRST, AMIDST WHIRLWINDS OF SAND. STILL THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT WE WOULD ARRIVE AT OUR DESTINATION, COMPLETE OUR MISSION AND RETURN TO DONG HA BY THE TIME THE PLANE WAS SCHEDULED TO TAKE OFF. WE HAD TO GO BACK TO DANANG BEFORE ARRIVING AT DA NANG. THE CREW CONTACTED THE STAFF OF I CORPS THREE TIMES BY RADIO BUT THEY GOT THE ANSWER THAT THEY HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS. UPON LANDING AT THE MILITARY AIRFIELD, THE PILOT HIMSELF PHONED CITY HALL BUT THERE WAS NO ONE ON DUTY. FINALLY, AT THE CIVILIAN AIR BASE, MR. HA THUC KY, ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US, CALLED GENERAL HOANG XUAN LAM, GOVERNMENT DELEGATE TO THE AREA. FROM THE OTHER END OF THE LINE CAME ANSWER THAT THE GENERAL WAS TAKING

A SIESTA AND THAT NO ONE DARED TO WAKE HIM UP. MORE THAN HALF

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AN HOUR AFTER MR. KY CALLED AGAIN AND THE ANSWER WAS THAT THE GENERAL WAS SICK AND COULD NOT RECEIVE ANYONE. FACED WITH THE IRRESPONSIBILITY AND LACK OF GOOD WILL OF THE REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, AS WELL AS BY THE LACK OF MEANS TO CONTACT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TICKETS IN DA NANG, WE HAD NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RETURN TO SAIGON. THAT, IN GENERAL TERMS, IS WHAT HAPPENED. IF YOU WANT MORE DETAILS, PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED REPORT.
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AFFAIR?
TO DETERMINE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS AFFAIR, WE CONVENED A MEETING ON AUGUST 7, 1967, FROM 4 TO 9 P.M. AT THE DIEN HONG HALL. AT THE MEETING, LAWYER NGUYEN VAN LOC, WHO WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF LIST 9, THAT IS YOUR TICKET, READ A REPORT OF VIETNAM PRESS WHICH WAS BASED UPON A CABLE FROM GENERAL HOANG XUAN LAM. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE AUTHORITIES IN QUANG TRI HAD FULFILLED THEIR MISSION BY ORGANIZING THE RECEPTION IN LA VANG WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF A BIG CROWD, BUILDING STANDS FOR US TO TALK, WAITING FOR US FOR THREE LONG HOURS ETC..; FINALLY, THE REPORT ATTRIBUTED THE INCIDENT TO AN UNEXPECTED OBSTACLE, SAYING THAT THE WIND WAS TOO VIOLENT THAT DAY AND THAT THE PLANE WAS FORCED TO LAND IN DONG HA BUT COULD NOT LAND IN LA VANG.
(MORE)
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P R 111040Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4435
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IN LA VANG.
VIETNAM PRESS IS AN INFORMATION AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE THE ARGUMENTS CONTAINED THEREIN ARE THE ARGUMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. WE ARE VERY SORRY THAT WE MUST REJECT THOSE ARGUMENTS FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:
1. IF IT WAS TRUE THAT A RECEPTION HAD BEEN ORGANIZED IN LA VANG, WHY WAS IT THAT, PRIOR TO THE DEPARTURE, THE CREW HAD BEEN ORDERED TO LAND IN DONG HA? IF THE MISTAKE IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN QUANG TRI AND SAIGON, IT MEANS

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THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS WORKING IN A DISORDERLY MANNER.

2. HOW DID GENERAL LAM KNOW THAT WE WERE CARRIED OFF BY THE WIND IN DONG HA? IF HE HEARD IT FROM QUANG TRI, WHY DID THE AUTHORITIES OF QUANG TRI LEAVE US IN THE LURCH ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW WE WERE IN AN UNFORTUNATE SITUATION, WHILE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN DONG HA AND LA VANG, WHERE THE REGIONAL AUTHORITIES WERE AT THAT TIME, WAS ONLY 17 KM. IF THAT WASN'T KNOWN UNTIL LATER, THEN WHO BROUGHT THE NEWS TO THE AUTHORITIES OF QUANG TRI? COULD IT BE THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHO WERE AT THE AIRFIELD, BECAUSE APART FROM THEM, THERE WAS NO VIETNAMESE AT

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ALL AT THE SITE. ANOTHER THING, THE PLANE WAS CARRIED ADRIFT BY THE WIND; THIS COULD NOT BE RIGHT BECAUSE THE WIND FROM LAOS WAS EVEN STRONGER IN DONG HA THAN IN LA VANG, AND THEREFORE THE PLANE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LAND IN DONG HA. MOREOVER, THE CREW WAS ALWAYS MAINTAINING RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH THE AIRFIELD, AND, OF COURSE, IF THAT HAD HAPPENED, THE CREW WOULD HAVE NOTIFIED THE AIRFIELD.

THIS (VIETNAM PRESS) STORY IS UNTRUE AND WAS DESIGNED TO HELP THE AUTHORITIES AVOID THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

3. THE REPORT OF VIETNAM PRESS INDICATED THAT GENERAL LAM

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WAS THOROUGHLY AWARE OF EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED, JUST AS IF HE WAS PERSONALLY FOLLOWING THE VENT. IT IS REGRETTED THAT HE KNEW EVERYTHING BUT DIDN'T TAKE ANY ACTION TO HELP CARRY ON THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, WE PUT ALL THE BLAME ON THE GOVERNMENT AND STRONGLY PROTEST AGAINST THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED AND WHICH WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO THINK WERE PREARRANGED WITH THE PURPOSE OF DISCREDITING US AND SABOTAGING THE ELECTIONS.

THE PROBLEM OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FUTURE

DOES THE GOVERNMENT, LED BY YOU, SINCERELY WANT THE ELECTIONS TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY SO THAT A GENUINE DEMOCRATIC REGIME CAN BE BUILT? IF SO, PLEASE MAKE CLEAR BY AN OFFICIAL MESSAGE, THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

1. DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND FOOD FOR THE CANDIDATES, AND TO TAKE EVERY ACTION TO INSURE THEIR SECURITY, WHEREVER THEY GO, DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN?

2. DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

THE CANDIDATES WITH ALL MEANS AVAILABLE AND TO FULLY ASSIST

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THEM IN THE ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC TALKS BY SELECTING SITES, LOANING MICROPHONES AND LOUDSPEAKERS, GATHERING CROWDS, MAINTAINING SECURITY AND ORDER, ETC..?
LAW 1/67, AS INTERPRETED BY US, IS VERY CLEAR, BOTH IN FORM AND CONTENT, IN SO FAR AS THE FOLLOWING BASIC PRINCIPLE IS CONCERNED: THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE AND THE LOCAL COMMITTEES HAVE THE DUTY TO ORGANIZE THE CAMPAIGN, BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING EQUAL MEANS TO THE CANDIDATES RESTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.
SINCE THE TIME FOR CAMPAIGNING IS LIMITED AND ANY DAY THAT PASSES IS A LOSS TO THE JOINT CAMPAIGN, WE (#)

2. DURING THE
DAY OF AUGUST ON 1967, SO THAT WE MAY BE IN A POSITION TO DECIDE UPON AN APPROPRIATE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CAMAPIGN, IN PARTICULAR, AND THE ELECTIONS, IN GENERAL.
PLEASE SEND YOUR REPLY TO THE OFFICE OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE WHICH IS LOCATED AT THE DIEN HONG HALL.
RESPECTFULLY YOURS, END QUOTE
(SIGNED BY REPRESENTATIVES OS SLATES 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11)
BUNKER

(#)AS RECEIVED.SERVICED UPON REQUEST

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